

REMARKS

In regard to the first paragraph on page 2 of the office action, the claims have been corrected above. However, the language "centring" has not been changed. The examiner is directed to MPEP 608.01 which recites:

"Examiners should not object to the specification and/or claims in patent applications merely because applicants are using British English spellings (e.g., colour) rather than American English spellings. It is not necessary to replace the British English spellings with the equivalent American English spellings in the U.S. patent applications. Note that 37 CFR 1.52(b)(1)(ii) only requires the application to be in the English language. There is no additional requirement that the English must be American English."

The examiner is requested to withdraw his objection.

Claims 1-3, 5 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Sato et al. (US 6,371,789). Claim 10 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sato et al. (US 6,371,789) in view of Asick et al. (US 4,762,505). Claims 1, 8 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Asick et al. (US 4,762,505) in view of Sato et al. (US 6,371,789). The examiner is requested to reconsider these rejections.

Claim 4 has been cancelled and its features have been added to claim 1, but with some clarifying amendments. In view of page 3 of the office action, claim 1 should now be in condition for

allowance. Claim 6 has also been converted from dependent form into independent form. In view of page 3 of the office action, claim 6 should now be in condition for allowance.

Claims 11-18 have been added above to claim the features recited therein.

In Sato, the connector is provided with a locking means (i.e. lock lug) having a held portion fixed in the terminal block and an engaging portion protruding from the front face of the connector. Sato fails to disclose a connector comprising a base (i.e. a terminal block) having a centering foot adapted to receive the locking means. Claim 11 is, therefore, new over Sato. The subject matter of claim 11 is also new over Asick. In Asick the locking means (136) are mounted onto the covers; not into the base of the connector as presently claimed.

With applicant's invention, thanks to the incorporation of the locking means into the centering feet, it is possible to provide a connector whose fitting with a complementary counterpart is made easier; and for which the locking means is not subject to deformation which may cause disengagement of the connector cover. These two objectives are not addressed in the prior art cited by the Examiner. In addition, even if the man skilled in the art had combined the teachings of the two cited references, this still would not arrive to the claimed solution, because these documents do not even suggest the solutions. Consequently, an inventive step could be recognised for claim 11. The features of claim 11 are not

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disclosed or suggested in the cited art. Therefore, claims 11-18 are patentable and should be allowed.

For all of the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now present in the application are clearly novel and patentable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested. Should any unresolved issue remain, the examiner is invited to call applicant's attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark F. Harrington 11/16/06
Mark F. Harrington (Reg. No. 31,686) Date

Customer No.: 29683
Harrington & Smith, LLP
4 Research Drive
Shelton, CT 06484-6212
203-925-9400

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